

MILITARY RESOURCES.

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and *Gobas*, according to the numerical strength of the quotas furnished by their respective districts and villages. Thus the *Kahlon* who brought a few hundreds was dignified with the title of *Stong-pon*,* "chief of a thousand," or colonel; a wealthy *Goba* who could muster from 50 to 100 men, was styled *Gyapon*,† "chief of a hundred," or captain; while an inferior *Goba* who was attended by only four or five men, was called *Chu-pon*,‡ "chief of ten," or serjeant. 701

The camp (*Maggar*§), which was pitched without any regularity, consisted almost entirely of black tents made of yák's hair. The *Kahlons* and some others had white blanket tents, but these were so few in number as not to affect the general sombre appearance of the camp. When, however, the cooking commenced, and volumes of smoke began to issue from the open roofs of the tents, now ascending in fantastic curls, and now whirling rapidly round and spreading a milky canopy over the black tents, the *Boti* camp wore a very picturesque appearance. During the day little was heard but the busy hum of men preparing their food or cleaning their arms, but towards evening the whole air frequently rang with noisy brawls and angry squabbles, which gave but too convincing a proof of the powerful influence of their favourite *chang*. 712 ●

All disputes in camp were settled at once by stripes or fine, according to the sentence of an assembly of officers, whose decisions were final. These assemblies 687 698

* *Stong-dPon*, commander of one thousand.

† *b,rGya-dPon*, commander of one hundred.

‡ *bChu-dPon*, commander of ten.

§ *dMag-sGar*, a "military camp," to distinguish it from the common encampment of the Nomads, *sGar*.

721 to the Botis of the east, which will account for his
 173 entering Kashmir by Gagangir on the Drás road, as
 related in the Raja Taringini.

● 712 The forts of Eastern Ladák were nearly all castellated
 793 monasteries, the defence of which was intrusted to the
 [701] unwarlike monks, assisted by a few of the armed pea-
 santry, who performed the duty by turns, under the
 command of one who was dignified with the title of
Kharpon, or governor.* In Western Ladák there were
 several castles belonging to petty chiefs, such as Paskyum
 and Soth, which were better calculated for defence. The

[312] monastic castles were mostly perched on high rocks
 quite destitute of water, and it was a part of the daily
 duty of the garrison to fetch water for the monks. Had
 any of these castles possessed a proper supply of water,
 their generally inaccessible positions would have rendered
 them safe against all common attacks. I have seen the
 monasteries of Hanlé, Hémis, Thigé, Shé, Lá, Pitak,
 Phyang, Bazgo, Láma Yúrrú, Heaku, Kharbu, Thakshé,
 and Mulbil, as well as the ruined forts of Balukhar and
 Paskyum. The monasteries are all built on steep cliffs,
 more or less high, with stone walls coloured white and
 red, and surmounted with an endless number of small
 flags. They are generally difficult of access, and always
 picturesque. Perhaps the most remarkable is that of
 Thakshé, on the right bank of the Kánji river. It is
 perched on a lofty isolated cliff, bluff and overhanging
 on the north side, and with a precipitous slope of about
 65° on the south side. The only ascent is by a very steep
 pathway.

* *mKhar-dPon*, "fort-chief." A fort is also called *rDzong*, and the
 governor *rDzong-dPon*. Every commandant of a castle, or military post,
 even if his garrison does not amount to more than four men, is digni-
 fied with the title of *Kharpon*.

- 712 The fort of Paskyum, on the left bank of the Waká-chu, commanded the passage of the river, which is there unfordable. It stood about 100 feet high, on an alluvial flat, overhanging the river; but it was easily taken by Zoráwar Sing, and afterwards destroyed. The fort of Sod was held out by the *Gyalpo* in person for ten days; but it was at last, after some loss, taken by assault, when it shared the same fate as Paskyum.

725 The best "means of defence" possessed by Ladák consisted in the general inaccessibility of the country during one half of the year, when the passes were closed by snow; and to the power of breaking down the bridges over the Indus, and other unfordable streams, during the summer. The latter was not, however, resorted to on Zoráwar Sing's invasion, excepting in the solitary case of the bridge at Paskyum; the destruction of which, by the Banka Kahlon, delayed the advance of the invaders for one day. The reason assigned for not breaking down the Khallach bridge, over the Indus, was, because its destruction would have stopped the traffic with Kashmir during one entire season. But the traffic was virtually stopped by the war; while the destruction of the bridge would have saved all the rich villages on the right bank of the Indus, as well as the capital itself, for a whole year. But the energetic Zoráwar was marching rapidly on, while the listless Botis were debating; and the bridge was passed, and the enemy had reached Bazgo, within twenty miles of the capital, before the helpless *Gyalpo* had decided upon what to do. Decision was then too late, as there was no alternative but flight or submission. The first, although a virtual relinquishment of the country, would have been manly and honourable; but the *Gyalpo*

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chose the more humiliating alternative of actual sur- 726
render. Such was the fate of a country which might
have been saved by a hundred resolute soldiers at the
bridge of Khallach. But the indolent votaries of an
almost worn-out faith were no match for the more
active and energetic worshippers of Mahadeo and Pár-
bati.

Under the government of Maharaja Guláb Sing, the 712 ●
country is held by a few garrisons of tolerably well-
appointed infantry, who are quartered in the different
forts erected by Zoráwar Sing and his successors. The
forts that I have seen are those of Lé, Kargyl, and
Drás, besides the bridge-head at Khallach. They are [312]
all built on the same kind of plan, and in similar
situations on the banks of streams, that they might
insure an unfailing supply of water, without which the
strongest fort would be untenable.

The new fort at Lé is built upon the open plain, and
on the edge of the Lé rivulet, at somewhat more than a
mile to the south-west of the city. I saw it to great
advantage on my visit, as the thanadar Basti Rám
had kindly deputed his son to attend me. Everything,
therefore, was prepared. The interior was trim and
orderly; the guns were clean and bright; and the men
were all dressed in respectable uniforms, which appeared
too new to have been much worn. The walls are built
of huge sun-dried bricks, and are nearly thirty feet in
height. In the interior the barracks, as well as the
store-rooms, are built against the walls all round, and
their flat roofs form the terre-plein of the ramparts.
Each room is furnished with a door. The guns are four
brass three-pounders, all in good order, and well set up
on substantial carriages. They are manned by thirty

- 7/2 well-dressed artillerymen. Altogether I was as much pleased with the orderly appearance, as with the judicious situation, of this fort.

The new fort of *Kargyil* is situated on the left bank of the Suru river, immediately above the junction of the *Waká-chu*. It is a square of about sixty yards, with round towers at the angles, and a square tower with a small outwork in the middle of the river-front. This work forms a difficult entrance, and at the same time insures a supply of water. The walls are loopholed throughout, and the garrison can sweep the bridge over the Suru river with deadly effect. The position was admirably chosen, as it completely commands the high-road to and from Kashmir.

The new fort of Drás is similar to those of Lé and Kargyil. It is situated on the left bank of the Drás river, and commands the passage of the valley.

The bridge-head of Khallach is on the right bank of the Indus. It consists of a square loopholed tower, built of large sun-dried bricks, with an inclosure surrounded by a high loopholed wall. The garrison of twelve men is furnished from Lé, and is relieved every three months. This work completely commands all approach to the bridge on each bank of the river.

- 643 In my opinion, the measures which the maharaja has
177 taken for the maintenance of his power in Ladák are
578 judicious and effective. Many people grumble; but the dissatisfaction is principally confined to the upper classes, who have lost all their power; and to the Kashmiri Mahomedans, a despicable race, who are ever wishing for change, and who, if they were under the British to-morrow, would long for the Chinese on the next day. To the lower classes the change of govern-

When there is no time to send for the beygáris next on the roster for duty, or when for any other reason it is not convenient to do so, a drum is beaten in the bazar of Leh and notice is cried out that each house, belonging to persons of the labouring classes, must supply one labourer, at a certain time and place. This kind of forced labour is called a hala. It is not frequent and does not bear heavily on the people.

The word thal or thral means "tax" and sa-thal means "land-tax," with reference either to the ordinary revenue assessment on the land, or to the forced labour claimable from land owners.

The word ranthak-i thal or "water-mill-tax" denotes another kind of forced labour. If the Kashmir officials require to have grain ground they send it down to one of the adjacent water mills, the owner of which has to at once set aside whatever work he may be engaged upon, and grind the State grain free of charge.

Monastery lands are free from beygar demands.

The people of Ladák were subject to this beygár tax even during the time of the Ladák Kings, but they object to the beygár system more than to any thing else in connection with the Dogra administration. They say that they do not object to the assessment on the land, for though it is heavy, its amount is a fixed one, and the dates for the payments of the several instalments are known to all, while with beygár the case is otherwise, there is no limit to it, and no one can be certain for a day that he will not be seized as a beygári or "unpaid labourer."

In 1885 an attempt was made by the Kashmir authorities to do away with the "Forced labour" system, and in lieu thereof to impose an additional cash charge upon the land, but the Lámas, who hold a large amount of land and who are already exempt from all "forced labour" were sufficiently powerful to get the proposed reform set aside. For further information see under "Tax."

[48] FORT--kila or peeoo a tower or minaret. The proper word is dzona, but it is not generally understood in Ladák, where there are no forts, except those erected by the Kashmir Government. The chief Lhása official at Gárdok is termed the "dzongson" or "fort commandant."

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the territory ceded to the British by the Sikhs, under Article IV of the Treaty of the 9th of March 1846. Immediately after the conclusion of this treaty, the British Government arranged to sell the whole of the territory ceded by the Sikhs, to Raja Gulab Singh of Jamoo, for a crore of rupees (Rs. 10,000,000), but as it was, on reconsideration of the question, deemed inexpedient to make over the whole of the territories in question, a treaty was concluded with Raja Gulab Singh, on 16th March 1846, the result of which was that Spiti and Lahaul remained British territory, and that Raja Gulab Singh paid the British Government only three quarters of a crore instead of a full crore of rupees.

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Ladák is now governed by a Wazir assisted by a Naib (or Deputy) Wazir. The garrison of the country consists of about 50 Regular soldiers, 50 Irregular soldiers, and some 70 Ladáki soldiers. There are forts at Khalsi, and Leh, the former is held by a guard of 6 or 8 men the remainder of the troops being in garrison at Leh. There used to be a fort at Shushot, but it has recently been pulled down as it was found to be of no use. The revenue of the country amounts to about Rs. 64,000 a year, and the expenditure to about Rs. 32,000.

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Considered by itself, Ladák is a poor and insignificant country, but, politically speaking, it is of some importance, as its frontiers are conterminous, on the north, with those of the Chinese, and on the east, with those of the Lhása Government. From a commercial point of view it is also a place of some importance, as a considerable portion of the trade between India and Central Asia passes through it. During the past three years the value of this trade has averaged about 15 lakhs Rs. (15,00,000) a year.

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A few merchants carry on a "through" trade, between India and Turkistan, but the mass of the trade is carried on between Indians and Kashmiris who come up as far as Leh only, and there exchange their goods for the products [79] of Central Asia, brought down by merchants, who do not go further south than Leh. This trade is most beneficial to Ladák, for as it is a long and hard journey from Leh to Yarkhand, or even from Leh to India, merchants, on reaching Leh, are glad to rest themselves and their baggage ponies (camels are not used) for a month, or even two months, before attempting the return journey. The result is that during the months of August, September and October the country people reap a small harvest by supplying

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361 of whose boughs, as, after the glare that one is exposed to on a
 241 summer day's march among these bare mountains, one lies by the
 stream that ripples beneath them, is itself a reward for the exposure
 and toil.

KARGIL TO KHALSI: FOUR MARCHES.

133^x It will take us four marches to reach the valley of the Indus;
 for though at Kargil we are only 12 or 13 miles away from that
 river, yet the more favourable course is to avoid it for a few
 days' journey still, to keep in the valleys of certain tributary
 streams whose direction lies well in the line of our road. The
 ground we shall go through is occupied by the ramifications of a
 great range of mountains that lies between the main chain on the
 south-west and the Indus River on the north-east. This range is
 irregular both in course and height; from some directions it is to
 be traversed only by very high Passes, but, as we are going, we
 shall cross two ridges that belong to it by comparatively low gaps
 quite easy to surmount.

133^x From Kargil we first go over the stony alluvial plain, which
 is bare of vegetation, and then, after five miles, descend to the
 village of Pāskim, a large village watered by cuts from the stream
 called Wakha; these watercourses are bordered by many willows
 and some tall poplar-trees. Nearly a thousand feet above the
 village, on the edge of a cliff, are some remains of a fort that used
 to be held by a Rajah tributary to Ladākh; an account of the
 taking of this place by the Dogrās is given in General Cun-
 ningham's book. The valley now narrows, and for 12 miles the
 road takes us up between dark rocky hills whose near slopes,
 those within sight, are not lofty. The halting-place is Shargol,
 20 miles from Kargil. A more even division of the distance
 would have been to make Pāskim the stage instead of Kargil, but
 this latter is the more usual rest-place, as it is now the head-
 quarters of the district, and besides it is often convenient to make
 marches of different lengths, for a quite short one will give the
 camp a long leisure for rest, or for repairs, or other business.

000 Shargol is the first village where there is a Buddhist monas-

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491 plan of crossing the stream three times, by wooden bridges, we
133* pass the difficulties and find our way to the valley of the Indus
itself, and, after another mile or two and after crossing the river,
to the village and halting-place of Khalsi.

KHALSI TO LEH: FOUR MARCHES.

491 The Indus is spanned by a wooden bridge where rocks narrow
● 712 it up to a width of 60 or 70 feet only. The bridge is com-
361 manded by a small fort on the higher bank; the path from the
241 bridge, indeed, is led along the covered way half round the fort.
The village of Khalsi is on a plateau about 250 feet above the
river; there is here a long strip of cultivated land watered from
a side-stream; crops and fruit-trees grow on it well, and even
luxuriantly; walnuts and apricots ripen, though the height above
the sea is something over 10,000 feet.

133* From this place upwards, to near Leh, the Indus Valley has
one character. The river flows either between rocks or against
alluvial cliffs, according to whether the mountain spurs reach the
water or strips of alluvium-terrace intervene. The hills that are
[36] seen are not very lofty; all are bare and extremely dry. The
[24] only green visible is on those spots where the streams from the
mountains on the north-east are brought on to the alluvial
plateaus and enable the ground to be tilled; there villages have
been formed, and we see the verdure of corn-fields and of orchards,
or rather of the lines of fruit-trees that have been planted along
the watercourses that skirt the little fields.

487 For the next three days' journey there are two routes that
may be taken; they unite again one march short of Leh. The first
is along the valley, keeping as near to the river as the ground will
allow; the other is a higher route along a series of plateaus behind
the former; it is this latter that we choose; the valley itself will
be again spoken of in a later chapter.

133* After continuing for a few miles in the immediate Indus Valley,
361 we turn up a ravine to the left, and, rising some 1500 feet, we get
on to a high plain between an outer, low, range of hills and the

inner high one. This plain is interrupted by cross valleys that, originating in the higher range, pass through the lower one down to the Indus; the plain thus becomes divided up into wide necks of land. In the first cross valley were several villages, one of them, Timisgām, ending the first stage from Khalsi. 133
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The next day's journey began by the route leading us up a branch of that valley, past some patches of cultivated ground, supporting each its own hamlet, into a narrow dry gulley between rounded hill-surfaces, up which we rose until we came out upon another such neck as we were on the day before. Again there crosses at right angles to the road a ravine which we have to go down into and up again by a zigzag path that gives us several hundred feet of fall and rise. Then a gradual descent brings us to Himis Shukpā, a noted place. This place is named after a grove of a hundred or two large shukpā, or pencil-cedar, trees which there grow about a stony mound. The girth of several of these trees is six or seven feet, and some that have irregular trunks measure 10 feet and more; they taper quickly upwards, reaching to a height of about 40 feet; it is a holy grove protected by the gods; disease and misfortune are said to overtake those who commit sacrilege against it. At Himis Shukpā are remains of a fort or tower, which was built by the Sokpos who invaded Ladākh towards the end of the seventeenth century; I was told that they built such towers in many places, and that this was the most westerly of them; its walls are of a kind of gravel or concrete moulded. 137
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From Himis Shukpā we go up over another neck of gravelly ground, and down to another ravine; the waters of this support the village called Yangthang, or "New Plain." This was settled five-and-twenty years ago by a Lāmā, who, by his wisdom and good management, got the main watercourse made, and, having established cultivation, fixed a monastery in the valley, in which there are now seventy Lāmās. The land, which, by grant, is free of Government dues, is cultivated by labourers who receive their food and clothing from the monastery. Two more plateaus, separated by a ravine, making five in this march, had to be crossed before Terfitee, which we made the halting place, was reached. 792
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it cannot be seen from the road. On our way we pass Thārd, ^{133^x}
 a collection of eight or ten houses, with corresponding cultivation ³⁶¹
 tion; then we cross the last of the plateaus, from which descend-
 ing we reach a little garden planted by the roadside for the
 shelter of travellers, which is close to the village of Phayāng ^[485]
 Thence a few miles by the side of the river brought us to Pitak,
 the last village before Leh.

All the cultivated spots hitherto met with in Ladākh were ³¹²
 watered from side-streams—streams coming almost immediately ^{133^x}
 from the mountains with a more or less steep fall. But at
 Pitak the land is irrigated from the Indus itself. For we are
 here at the beginning of a part of the Indus Valley, where the
 bottom is wide and is occupied by a flat of alluvium, over which
 the waters of the main stream can be brought.

At Pitak there is an isolated rock a few hundred feet high, ³⁶¹
 on which all the older buildings are situated. The monastery ⁷⁹²
 is on the summit at one end, and there is a fortification—of two ⁷¹²
 towers connected by a double wall—that must have helped to make
 the rock a strong position. Formerly all the houses were, for
 protection's sake, built thus high up; this was very commonly
 the case throughout Ladākh, only in the last generation or so
 have the people taken generally to building in the plain.

We are now but five miles from Leh, the capital; it is indeed
 within sight from the summit of the rock; let us from here take
 a general view of the geographical position of that town.

The river is 10,500 feet above the sea; it is flowing with a
 gentle current in a flat, the surface of which is in great part ^{133^x}
 of pebbles only, but here and there it is of such a fine alluvial
 soil that the people have been able to bring it under cultivation.
 On the south-west side this low flat is bordered by a stretch of
 sloping gravelly ground, consisting of a number of coalesced fans
 that have been deposited by streams having their origin in the
 mountains on the south—mountains which rise up to 20,000 feet.
 On the north-east of the river there continues the same great
 granite ridge, at the foot of which we have been passing; the
 summit of it is about 12 miles from the Indus, as the crow flies.

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135^x The line of ridge is from 18,000 to 19,000 feet high. The Passes through it are 17,000 and 18,000 feet.

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133^x A valley, coming down from this great central ridge, bounded close by rocky branch-ridges, at the distance of four miles from the river widens, the spurs of the hills both becoming lower and retreating aside, insomuch that there occurs an open space of the form nearly of an equilateral triangle, the side of it five miles in length. The town of Leh is at the apex of this triangle, where the valley begins to widen. Rocky hill-spurs form the sides, the river Indus the base, Pitak being at one end of the base.

[311] This triangular space is not a level; it has a steady, gentle slope up from the river. Advancing from Pitak we rise, in the five or six miles, about 1000 feet, the altitude of the town of Leh being 11,500 feet. The lower part of the slope (of which the whole consists of a gravelly alluvial deposit) is dry and stony, but as we go on we come within the tract that the side-stream has been able to supply with irrigating water, and find a space of several hundred acres covered with crops.

361 Here, by the farther edge of this cultivated space, on one of the branch spurs from the hills and spreading on to the plain in front of it, is built the town of Leh. The most conspicuous object in it is the palace of the former rulers, an edifice boldly built up to the height of eight or ten stories from the shoulder of the spur; a slight in-leaning of the massive walls gives it a great look of strength. Higher up, on the same rocky ridge, are the monastery and the towers of an old fortification. Below, in front of the palace, houses cover the slope. On the flat beneath is the newer part of the town. Entering from the direction of Kashmir we pass through a small gateway and find ourselves in a long, wide, and straight bazaar, the houses regularly built and uniformly whitewashed. This has been erected since the Dogrās took the country, and is now the place that is most frequented. At the farther end of this bazaar one passes into the old part of the town, among houses separated by narrow winding passages. As one rises on to the slope of the hill one meets with a few houses of a

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